



**The Trump Kennedy Center**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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Headshot [here](#).

**The Donald J. Trump and John F. Kennedy Memorial Center for  
the Performing Arts  
will present  
The 27th Mark Twain Prize for American Humor  
to  
Bill Maher**



**Prize Will Be Awarded at the Trump Kennedy Center  
at a Gala Performance on June 28, 2026**

**Washington, D.C.** — The Donald J. Trump and John F. Kennedy Memorial Center for the Performing Arts will present the 27th Mark Twain Prize for American Humor to **Bill Maher** on June 28, 2026 in the Trump Kennedy Center Concert Hall. The Prize, which is named to honor one of the world’s greatest humorists, will be awarded at a gala performance featuring some of the biggest names in comedy. The program will premiere exclusively on Netflix, with a streaming date to be announced.

“For nearly three decades, the Mark Twain Prize has celebrated some of the greatest minds in comedy,” said **Roma Daravi, Vice President of Public Relations**. “For even longer, Bill has been influencing American discourse – one politically incorrect joke at a time.”

“Thank you to the Mark Twain people: I just had the award explained to me, and apparently it’s like an Emmy, except I win,” said **Bill Maher**. “I’d just like to say that it is indeed humbling to get anything named for a man who’s been thrown out of as many school libraries as Mark Twain.”

The Mark Twain Prize for American Humor recognizes individuals who have had an impact on American society in ways similar to the distinguished 19th-century novelist and essayist Samuel Clemens, colloquially known as Mark Twain. As a social commentator, satirist, and creator of characters, Clemens was a fearless observer of society who delighted and informed onlookers with his uncompromising perspective on society and personal folly. The event was created by Bob Kaminsky, Peter Kaminsky, Mark Krantz, and John Schreiber.

As a recipient of the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor, Maher will receive a copy of an 1884 bronze portrait bust of Mark Twain sculpted by Karl Gerhardt (1853–1940). Previous recipients of the Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize are Richard Pryor (1998), Jonathan Winters (1999), Carl Reiner (2000), Whoopi Goldberg (2001), Bob Newhart (2002), Lily Tomlin (2003), Lorne Michaels (2004), Steve Martin (2005), Neil Simon (2006), Billy Crystal (2007), George Carlin (2008), Bill Cosby (2009; rescinded in 2018), Tina Fey (2010), Will Ferrell (2011), Ellen DeGeneres (2012), Carol Burnett (2013), Jay Leno (2014), Eddie Murphy (2015), Bill Murray (2016), David Letterman (2017), Julia Louis-Dreyfus (2018), Dave Chappelle (2019), Jon Stewart (2022), Adam Sandler (2023), Kevin Hart (2024), and Conan O’Brien (2025).

## **About Bill Maher**

For more than twenty-five years, Bill Maher has set the boundaries of where funny, political talk can go on American television. First on “Politically Incorrect” (Comedy Central, ABC, 1993-2002), and for more than twenty years on HBO’s “Real Time,” Bill’s combination of unflinching honesty and big laughs have garnered him 42 Emmy nominations. Bill won his first Emmy in 2014 as executive producer for the HBO series, “VICE.”

Most recently, Bill released his blockbuster, New York Times bestselling book “What This Comedian Said Will Shock You.” (Simon & Schuster) A brilliantly astute and acerbically funny vivisection of American life, politics, and culture, it is Maher’s first book in more than a decade. He has written five bestsellers: “True Story,” “Does Anybody Have a Problem with That? Politically Incorrect’s Greatest Hits,” “When You Ride Alone, You Ride with Bin Laden,” “New Rules: Polite Musings from a Timid Observer,” and, “The New New Rules: A Funny Look at How Everybody But Me Has Their Head Up Their Ass.”

In 2022, Bill launched a new podcast, “Club Random with Bill Maher.” The podcast records at the bar on his property in Los Angeles, called Club Random, where he hosts hour-long, one-on-one interviews with

a wide range of eclectic guests. Each episode features free flowing, long-form conversations about anything and everything.

He started his career as a stand-up comedian in 1979 and has been recognized with numerous Emmy nominations for his stand-up specials for HBO. He's done 13 solo specials for the premium cable channel including, "Bill Maher: Be More Cynical" (2000), "I'm Swiss" (2005), "Bill Maher ... But I'm Not Wrong" (2010), "Bill Maher: Live From Oklahoma" (2018), "#Adulting"(2022) and the Golden Globe-nominated "Bill Maher: Is Anyone Else Seeing This?" which is available to stream on HBO Max.

He was born in New York City, raised in River Vale, N.J., and went to Cornell University. Bill now resides in Los Angeles.

### **About The Trump Kennedy Center**

The Donald J. Trump and John F. Kennedy Memorial Center for the Performing Arts is America's living memorial to President John F. Kennedy, attracting millions of visitors each year to more than 2,000 performances, events, and exhibits. With its artistic affiliate, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Center is one of the nation's most prestigious performing arts centers, dedicated to providing world-class art, powerful education, and outstanding memorial experiences to the broadest possible constituency. To learn more about the Center, please visit our [website](#).

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